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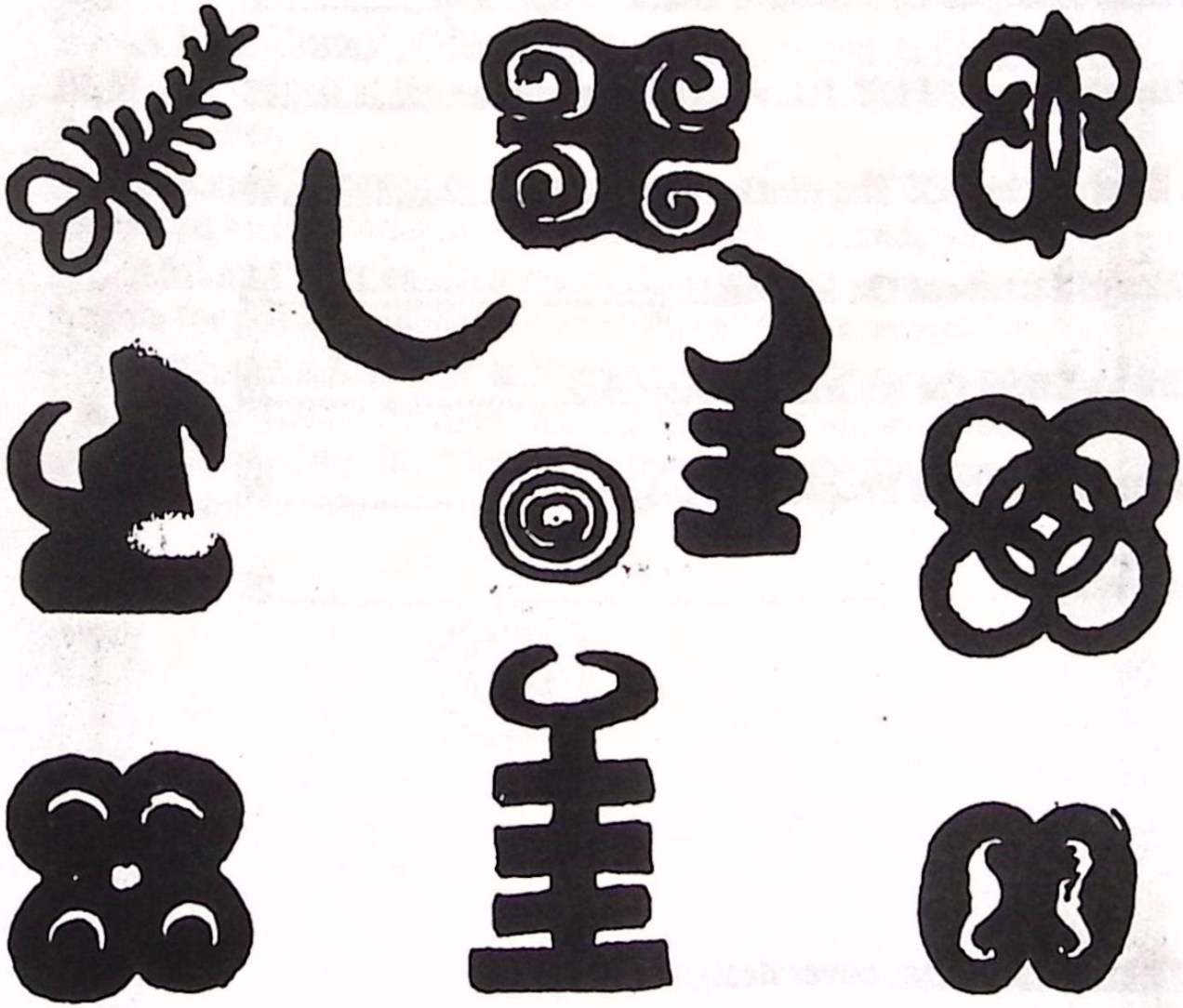
BITS 'N PIECES

by SUNDIATA ACOLI



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Adinkra Symbolism cover design by Zayd.

PREFACE

This is a random selection from various articles essays, letters, and statements written by Sundiata over a 15 year period.

Letter to the Youth was one of numerous articles solicited from various prisoners at Leavenworth by Guy Fisher for a book to be published by his friend to provide positive messages to the youth.

Trane, Comrade George, and G was written for Arm The Masses the political newspaper of The December 12th Movement in New York City.

Control Units was written for a publication of the Ohio-7 political prisoners.

Letter to a Rutgers Law Student was written in response to a request by Keith for information to present to his criminology class.

Eulogy for Kuwasi was written for Kuwasi Balagoon's funeral.

A Brief Analysis of Effective Black Leadership was written for an unknown occassion.

Statement to NAPO's Fiirst Annual Convention is self-explanatory.

A Brief History of the Black Panther Party and its Place in the BLM was written at the request of Safiya Bukhari ex-Panther and BLA member.

Chicago Statement on Marion was written for a Chicago rally sponsored by the Committee to End the Marion Lockdown.

Afrika's Effect on Afrikans in America was written for Bibi Angola for possible publication in a Ghana, Afrika newspaper.

Letter to the Irish People Newspaper was written in response to a headline article by the Irish People Newspaper which claimed that the "UPI tainted the IRA" by mentionening it in the same sentenc as the BLA and WUO.

LETTER TO THE YOUTH:ON BEING MEN AND WOMEN

When you're young time seems to stand still. The summers are long, the winters are even longer, and the school term lasts "forever." Your parents' favorite word is "no" and it seems that you'll never become grown-up.

You will eventually, but what will you be when you do grow up? As simple as it may sound, i urge that you be men and women. I don't mean someone who's simply "over 21" but real men and real women. And to do so, i urge that you pursue knowledge, truth, courage and justice.

A man or a woman is, in the first place, someone who is able to stand on their own two feet. They're able to take care of themselves and earn their own living. This means they're able to support themselves by doing something that other people need or want. But in order to do something, you must first know something : have knowledge, talent or skills. Now knowledge, talent, and skills are usually gotten in one form of school or another through study, training and practice. So its important that you go to school and stay in school. If the schools "don't teach" then it's your duty as students, along with your parents, teachers, and community, to transform the school "by any means necessary" so that it does teach; otherwise you're being robbed of part of your manhood and womanhood.

You should seek truth because it's the highest form of knowledge. It comes from knowing "how to think", in particular how to think for yourself, and to analyze things for yourself so that you can arrive at correct conclusions, and discover truths for yourself. That's what makes one intelligent, which is different from simply possessing book-learning or academic degrees.

Life holds many mysteries when you're young. The beauty of youth is in your eagerness to find answers to the "many questions" that you have. The tragedy of youth is that the world is full of lies that lead you astray Unless you learn to think for yourself and find truths for yourself you'll fall victim to the lies of the world.

Seek courage because a coward cannot be a man or woman. That doesn't mean that you should be foolhardy, it simply means that you should be able to be afraid but still perform in an honorable

manner. Without courage you won't be able to face or overcome the threats that constantly challenge anyone who aspires to be a man or woman.

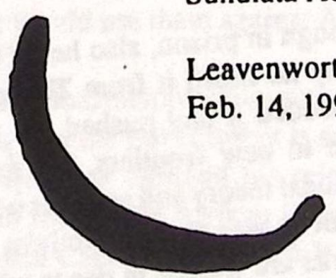
Seek justice because injustice is the root cause of most of the problems of the world today. Injustices have been committed against the majority of the world's peoples, particularly Afrikans and other peoples of color, in order to rob them of their wealth and heritage. Then lies were, and are, told to cover up these crimes and to keep you, me, and the rest of the world ignorant, poor, and silent accomplices to the robbery of our own selves. To know this concept, or truth, is to be "conscious." To act on this consciousness is to pursue justice, primarily by fighting injustice.

Many youths are intelligent, know right from wrong, and are very courageous, but they lack "consciousness" and the skills to get a decent job. Thus they easily fall victim to using their talents against the interest of their own people: the drug trade, for instance. Besides robbing their own community, keeping it in turmoil and at war against itself, they wind up in prison or killed; their lives wasted for nothing.

With consciousness, courage, and a love of justice youth can find ways to stand on their own two feet by using their skills to benefit themselves and their people, or at least refrain from using them in a way that's detrimental to their people. That is what makes you a man or a woman. The summers will seem shorter, and the winters too. You'll begin to have children of your own, your favorite word will be "no", and life will be a lot less mysterious. You'll be a real man, or a real woman, and you'll know it.

Sundiata Acoli, Political Prisoner of War

Leavenworth, Kansas
Feb. 14, 1992



TRANE, COMRADE GEORGE, AND G

John Coltrane (Trane), George Jackson (Comrade George), and Geronimo ji-Jaga (G), were all born in the month of September. Each in his own way has become an icon of Afrikan culture today so it's only fitting that during this month we honor them and their contribution to Afrikan Liberation.

Trane was the pre-eminent jazz musician of the insurgent '60s. He was, through his music, both harbinger/forecaster and drum major of the times. His improvisations on the sax seemed to both foretell and capsulize the mood, aspirations, and longings of Afrikan people of the era, and accompany them on their push outward toward new frontiers. Then regrouping with new combinations and rhythms, driving harder, taking it higher, unbelievably higher still, pushing further and further out, again and again until, at last he/we would break through in an ecstacy of total and complete freedom.

He seemed to intrinsically understand our deep longing for freedom, pushed us to expand our minds, and to search relentlessly for new methods of struggle. He soothed us when fearful, encouraged us when doubtful consoled us in defeat, and celebrated with us in victory, and in love... all with his music alone. That, to me, was Trane. Even today when i hear his unmistakable style, i smile, and silently thank him for his wise counsel, his consolation, and for being there when i needed him, by my side during those troubled and turbulent times.

Comrade George, although in prison, also heard the revolutionary call. i can't actually say he heard it from Trane, but from "wherever" he heard it, he heeded it and pushed the borders of Afrikan revolutionary struggle to new frontiers. He made many contributions to the body of political theory and analysis which are so well chronicled in his books. But he was as much activist as theoretician. Some of his greatest works are written in deeds which speak eloquently of him. Particularly well spoken/done were his leadership abilities, his prison organizing which transformed many criminal mentalities into revolutionary ones, his principles of self-defense

through retaliation, and his application of prison guerilla tactics to urban irregular warfare tactics, and vice versa. Although he was killed in prison by guards, a major premise of his is just as valid today as when he first made the call, which is - "the ultimate goal of prison struggle is the building of an infrastructure capable of fielding a people's army."

G, a contemporary of Comrade George, is undoubtedly his heir apparent. He's both deserving and well-suited for the role. For that very reason he was framed over 20 years ago and has been imprisoned ever since although the government *knows* he is innocent. Even the FBI agent who helped frame him has publicly admitted as much. Yet to further prevent G's release the government has gone so far as to recently charge him with a slanderous drug sale. It's the "Big Lie" tactic at work all over again. Anyone who knows G, as i do, has no doubt that he's being framed again.

G's contributions to revolutionary struggle are many and legendary, but for brevity's sake i'll chronicle only one. Upon his return from the Viet Nam war as a highly decorated vet, he joined the Black Panther Party (BPP) and used his expertise to fight against the racist US system. One of his first acts was to begin the recruitment of gang members into the BPP. He transformed many of them from common street bandits who preyed upon the Afrikan community into revolutionary fighters for the liberation of Afrikan people. In light of the habit of today's Afrikan street gangs to senselessly shoot into Afrikan crowds one can readily appreciate the depth of G's insight and the far range of his vision. Even then he knew that the Afrikan street gangs had to be organized to fight for Afrikan liberation or the government would use them against Afrikan people's aspirations for freedom.

If we let that mistake continue uncorrected we do so at our own peril. That's why the government is so set on keeping G imprisoned - and why we must demand his release, and the release of other P.O.W.s who fought for Afrikan liberation.

Amilcar Cabral, late Guinea-Bissau liberation leader, emphasized the role that culture plays as a weapon against imperialist domination. He held that no people who maintained their original culture could ever be completely conquered by a foreign enemy. Our

enemies also know of this dialectical relationship between culture and resistance to foreign subjugation. Thus they constantly seek to erase each new cultural innovation that comes from our roots. Their latest targets are Africentricity, the hip hop culture and its rap music groups like Public Enemy, Queen Latifah, KRS-1, X-Clan and others who project progressive cultural messages. They are the new harbingers of social change in the 90s. Our enemies seek to silence them so that we would remain mindless imitators of decadent Western culture.

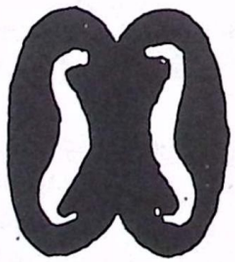
We have no need to imitate anyone else. Culturally speaking, everything necessary for our total liberation and development already exist within our own historical roots. The origins of science, philosophy, medicine, art, religion, and even humans themselves, can all be traced back to our own culture many 1000's of years ago. We have only to return to the source, to search our roots, in order to formulate adequate solutions to our problems.

Each time we search and find a cultural application from deep within our own historical roots, it expands our knowledge of ourselves and the world, it ushers in new cultural innovations among our people, and in turn causes a revolution in our thoughts and actions - and in society. In other words, cultural revolutions are harbingers of social revolutions. That is the real legacy of Trane, and the Coltranes of the world. His musical revolution and innovations spoke sublimely to the revolutionary spirit in Afrikans.

He was the harbinger and drum major of the insurgent 60's and beyond; and 1000's upon 1000's of peoples, among them Comrade George and G, heeded its call.

Sundiata Acoli

Leavenworth, Kansas
8/91



CONTROL UNITS.

Control units were created so that selected prisoners could be taken out of circulation and punished more severely. In reality control units are political prisons within the regular prison.

Before there were control units there was "the hole." Any prisoner who violates the prison's disciplinary codes is sent to "the hole" as punishment. "The hole" was, and is, simply a jail within the regular prison.

But prison officials found that some prisoners didn't violate the disciplinary codes, or didn't violate them often enough or seriously enough to receive frequent or long term sentences in "the hole." The officials wanted a way to take these or other selected prisoners out of circulation for long periods and/or to punish them more harshly, particularly if the prisoner represented an image that officials disliked, or had influence among other prisoners, or expressed ideas/beliefs that officials disagreed with, or had been convicted of a "crime" that officials felt required extra punishment.

So in order to be able to lock up the aforementioned type prisoners at will, or on slight pretense, prison officials created control units. If the selected prisoner has violated no disciplinary code, official can simply say that they feel the prisoner need "closer supervision." They then lock him/her in the control unit until they feel "closer supervision" is no longer needed, which can take years, and years, and years....

Sundiata Acoli,

Leavenworth Penitentiary, Kansas
7/9/89

LETTER TO A RUTGERS LAW STUDENT

4/22/89

Greetings Keith,

Hope this finds you well and i received your 4/14 request for info on my case for presentation to your criminology class. Since i am not a criminal but a freedom fighter, specifically one who has been captured, then to me "criminology" conjures up images of "experts" studying "criminal" behavior, the "criminal" mind, and lately i've even heard of "criminal" genes.

That being so, then seems you'd have been better served had you sent your inquiry to Ed Meese, Richard NIxon, Ronald Reagan, or William Bennet. They are real criminals, with criminal minds, criminal behavior, and perhaps even criminal genes, although i doubt that they'd give away trade secrets to the public, so you've probably not lost much by not going there.

At least your search took you outside the classroom. That's good. It's difficult to learn much about criminology, or societal issues period, in today universities. Normally they serve to brainwash and socialize you to take your place in an already well-oiled entrenched bureaucracy.

Otherwise how do you explain so many young idealistic teachers who enter the school system with a fervent desire to teach, yet ghetto schools don't teach. Five to ten years later those same teachers have become alienated, uncaring, and find themselves only "going through the motions" in order to collect their checks. Or how does the same happen to eager young social workers who ten years later find themselves kicking young mothers off welfare because they had found a pair of men's hoes in the mother's closet.

Teachers have been successfully teaching kids for 10,000 years and more, but suddenly U.S. schools can't teach ghetto kids. The cause of crime has been known for even longer, still Phd criminologist publish new books every other week on new and better methods of eradicating "criminal" behavior. In the meantime you and i sit here

in the midst of the greatest crime epidemic in history -- and wonder "Who's kidding who?"

There's no mystery to the cause of crime, it's rooted in INJUSTICE. Wherever conditions are unjust crime runs rampant. The remaining causes are the same that have been around since human beginning - i.e., greed, lust, envy, etc. Meaning that the latter are simply human characteristics found in any people to one degree or another, and which can be reasonably controlled by providing all people with the means to make/have a decent living, with education (academic and moral), with opportunity to flourish -- and the freedom and equality to do so; and by providing them with the other basic needs that would normally be provided in any JUST society. If done, crime would disappear almost overnight and remaining would only be the occasional crime of someone who couldn't control their lust for their neighbors wife -- and raped her, or couldn't control their hate for "whoever" -- and killed them, etc., but definitely there would be no crime epidemic.

One doesn't need a Phd to know this nor to understand why ghetto schools don't teach. Although, as a case in point, i had long wondered how schools have continually gotten away with tracking ghetto kids into "slow learner", "retarded learner", and vocational education classes without their parents, teachers, principals, and communities raising pure hell about it. Well, recently my youngest daughter unwittingly provided me with the answer -- or perhaps she simply used diplomacy to hide the fact that she's become sharper than i am. Anyway , she's an engineering student at Howard University (yes, she was in the recent takeover of the Administration Building to oust Atwater) and she also tutors "slow learner" kids in the community.

She wrote me about her first student, an 11 year old in the 4th grade, and said "he didn't appear slow at all, and instead turned out to be very intelligent -- but the schools get paid more for slow learner kids." It then dawned on me that **was how they did it.** The schools are paid <u>not</u> to teach ghetto kids. The more students they can cram into "slow learner" categories the bigger their budget allotments, and everyone keeps quiet about it -- the teachers, the principals, the superintendent, and on up the ladder to the government's Education

Department in HEW (Health, Education, and Welfare). Poor parents, (unlike the middle class), seldom challenge teachers who put their kids in "slow learner" classes, or they discover it too late when the damage has already been done.

Since welfare obviously doesn't work either, nor is it designed so, it's much easier to trace similar reasons all the way up to the Welfare Department in HEW again -- in other words -- the U.S. government again.

Since i've digressed through criminal behavior in Education and Welfare i might as well make a clean sweep with the remaining HEW agency: Health.

Supposedly, AIDS first burst upon the scene around 1979, specifically in Central Afrika, Haiti, and the U.S. gay and ghetto communities. And supposedly it was a natural disease never seen nor heard of before.

Then would someone please explain to me the following passage of a 1969 book titled "A Survey of Chemical and Biological Warfare" by John Cookson and Judith Notingham, published by Monthly Review Press of London, England; which on page 322 says:

> " The question of whether new diseases could be used is of considerable interest. *Vervet monkey disease may well be an example of a whole new class of disease causing organisms. Handling of blood and tissue without precaution causes infection. It is unaffected by any anti-biotic substances so far tried and is unrelated to any other organism. It causes fatality is some cases and can be venerally transmitted in man....It has possible potential as an infectious disease in man. It presumably is also of biological warfare interest. New virus disease are continually appearing. In addition to these are the possibilities of virus and bacteria being genetically manipulated to produce "new organisms."

The vervet monkey is none other than the green monkey, *the Afrikan green monkey, which the U.S. media spread news stories around the world as "somehow" causing a new sexually transmitted disease epidemic is Central Afrika, which spread to Haiti, and then to the U.S. gay/ghetto communities. Yet they never explained how a

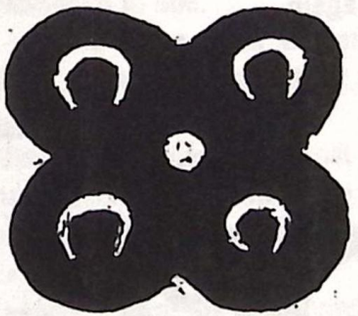
virus, which everyone claimed not to know, could be written about in a Biological Warfare book ten years before it ever appeared on the scene.

There seems only one logical answer to me. AIDS is not a natural disease but one genetically manufactured in a Biological Warfare Laboratory. With history and experience as a guide (particularly the provision of small-pox blankets to Indians and the withholding of syphilis cure Black men in the Tuskegee Experiment) one can reasonably assume that AIDS too can eventually be traced back to criminal behavior on the part of the U.S. Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare -- in other words, the U.S. government again.

That's basically my contribution to your presentation, except to add that my case stems from fighting criminal behavior on the part of the U.S. government, otherwise i would not be in prison. Enclosed is a brief biography of my case history. If you need more information don't hesitate to contact me.

Struggle,

Sundiata



12/16/86

Eulogy For Kuwasi

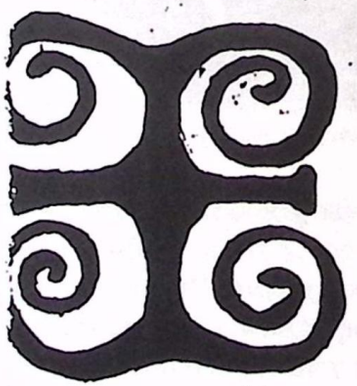
Kuwasi Balagoon was a revolutionary, a rebel, a poet, and he was faithful to his calling. Once he stepped upon the revolutionary path, he remained true to the struggle for the rest of his life, fighting the good fight, staying in shape, writing poetry, and helping fallen comrades at a moments notice, never stopping to count the cost.

He was a natural rebel, couldn't stand conformity or authority, especially an illegitimate one. And he had the heart of a gun fighter, which he was, using his tools in the service of Black people all his adult life.

If you ever read of heard his poem, "I'm A Wild Man", you knew him, because it described him to a "T" -- and he was wild. He knew it, we knew it, and we loved him for it, because it was his nature...and the nature of the times, in the late '60s, when Black folk needed wild men; and still do today.

But now Kuwasi's gone, and the beat goes on, and we who knew and loved him can only eulogize him -- and constantly scan the horizon wondering how long, how long it will be, before another giant such as he comes along again.

Sundiata Acoli



A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF EFFECTIVE BLACK LEADERSHIP

To best understand effective Black leadership one should study the life and works of the greatest Black leaders. A few who come to mind in recent history and in the western hemisphere are: Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, Toussaint L'Overature, Dessalines, Nat Turner, Harriet Tubman, Elijah Muhammad, Martin Luther King, Assata Shakur, and Huey P. Newton. None were perfect, few people are, and some i even dislike because of the way they ended their career. But that's beside the point when it comes to determining why they were/ are such effective Black leaders.

A common thread running through most of the forenamed leaders is:

1. Most proposed radical, activist, and nationalist solutions to Black problems.
2. All led by practicing what they preached.
3. Most were good speakers and good propagandist. Several were good writers, and some created their own newspaper.
4. Most depended primarily on common Black people as their base of support and held themselves accountable only to Black people.
5. All were good organizers, and most created their own organization or belonged to one.
6. Most created some form of military or para-military formation to defend themselves and Black people or to attack the enemy.

Besides the above similarities, most seemed to have certain psychological characteristics in common too. Some more or less than others, but all possessed some of the following characteristics to one degree or another:

1. Intelligence: - meaning the possession of good common sense; the power to think, reason, and analyze situations that one is confronted with in order to grasp the core of the problem. It has nothing to do with I.Q. scores or college degrees but simply means to be able to think intelligently. Malcolm X is a prime example. He was very intelligent, yet he never went to college.

2. Activism: - to act. Once coming to a conclusion on what they

felt was the core of the problem, they acted on it, regardless of the consequences. Nat Turner, Toussaint L'Overature, Dessalines, and Harriet Tubman were the essence of activism in its purest form.

3. Courage: All great undertakings entail great risk, and yet there is no greater endeavor than the task of liberating one's people. Any effective leader needs a healthy dose of courage otherwise s/he will eventually cave in to constant threat of danger that "comes with the territory." Harriet Tubman and Assata possessed exceptional courage. Huey P. Newton, in performing the acts that he did to create the Black Panther Party, also possessed exceptional courage. Unfortunately, he caved-in later to the pressures.

4. Sincerity/Integrity: Effective Black leadership requires a pure heart because that leadership holds the trust of an entire people in its hands. It will continually face propositions to sell that trust in exchange for its life or material riches. Malcolm X, Marcus Garvey, and Martin Luther King were models of sincerity, integrity, and the possession of great love for their people.

5. Will/Steadfastness: A liberation struggle is like a marathon run. Without a strong determination the average leadership will gradually be worn down (if it survives that long) by time, frustration, lean years, and the constant struggle to overcome one obstacle after another. Unless steadfast, it won't be able to keep its bearing when tossed about in the storms of struggle but will vacillate with each new wind that blows up. Elijah Muhammad exemplifies steadfastness in effective Black leadership.

6. Flexibility: While effective leadership must be steadfast, it must not be rigid. This requires the flexibility to adjust to changing circumstances and to new or broader understandings. Malcolm X, Toussaint L'Overature, and Dessalines were exceptional in this regards.

7. Spirit: - which is a particular quality about a leadership, its goals and methods, that inspires the masses and arouses their enthusiasm, loyalty, and support. Almost all the fore mentioned leaders were exemplary in this category.

Naturally these are not the only characteristics necessary, but they are some of the more common ones which any aspiring Black leader needs to possess to be effective.

Sundiata Acoli

Marion Penitentiary, IL
1/20/86

Statement To NAPO's First Annual Convention

June 13, 1985

Free the Land! NAPO brothers and sisters, and my warmest solidarity greetings to each of you. I only have two short points that i'd like to stress, which are:

One, for a New Afrikan organization to be effective, it must be linked to the Black masses. It must be able to obtain the loyalty and following of masses of Black people and provide direction for them. But you can't develope this type of mass following by standing on a hill spouting political directives, or by talking only to those who are already political. You build a mass following by going down into the valley where the masses are -- the common Black man, the common Black woman, and Black youths, -- struggling shoulder to shoulder with them, sharing their burdens, and showing them through deeds and words that the principles you preach can also be applied to solving their day to day problems too. Any political organization that can't or won't do this doesn't really believe what they preach, and the Black masses know this, and won't follow them unless they do practice what they preach and it proves to be effective.

Two, or second, is that if you began to prove effective, you will be attacked. In fact, whether proved effective yet or not, you'll probably be attacked anyway -- just for being out there; because that's the way this government operates.

So if one knows they're going to be attacked, it's common sense to devise plans ahead of time to defend oneself. Now that doesn't mean doing something stupid, or getting sucked into some stupid trap, cause we've already had too many examples of that in this country. Self-defense simply means defending oneself or the organization in whatever manner that's appropriate for the situation. But self-defense must be taken into consideration ahead of time because the attack will come.

I know that you're already doing many of these things but i simply wanted to stress two of the most important ones, which are - One, build your base upon the Black masses, and Two, build self-defense capabilities. Thank you for allowing me to share these few

words with you and i hope your Convention is crowned with unqualified success.

Sundiata Acoli,

USP Marion, IL

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY(BPP AND ITS PLACE IN THE BLACK LIBERATION MOVEMENT

The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was founded in October, 1966 in Oakland, California, by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale. The name was shortened to the Black Panther Party (BPP) and it began spreading eastward through the Black urban ghetto-colonies across country

In the summer of '68, David Brothers established a BPP branch in Brooklyn, New York, and few months later Lumumba Shakur set up a branch in Harlem, New York. I joined the Harlem BPP in the fall of '68 and served as its Finance Officer until arrested on April 2, 1969 in the Panther 21 Conspiracy case which was the opening shot in the government's nationwide attack on the BPP. Moving westward, Police Departments in each city made military raids on BPP offices or homes in Philadelphia, Chicago, Newark, Omaha, Denver, New Haven, San Diego, Los Angeles, and other cities, murdered some Panthers and arresting others.

After I and most other Panther 21 members were held in jail and on trial for two years, we were all acquitted of all charges and released. Most of us returned to the community and to the BPP but by then COINTELPRO had taken its toll. The BPP was rife with dissension, both internal and external. The internal strife, division, intrigue, and paranoia had become so ingrained that eventually most members drifted, or were driven, away. Some continued the struggle on other fronts and some basically cooled out altogether. The BPP limped on for several more years, then died what seemed a natural death.

History will be the ultimate judge of the BPP's place in the Black Liberation Movement (BLM). But in these troubled times Afrikan people in the U.S. need to investigate both the positive and negative aspects of the BPP's history in order to learn from those hard lessons already paid for in blood. In particular we need to learn the reasons for the BPP's rapid rise to prominence, the reason for its ability to move so many Afrikans and other nationalities, and the reason for its demise during its brief sojourn across the American

scene. It's not possible in this short paper, on short notice, to provide much of what is necessary, so this paper will confine itself to pointing out some of the broader aspects of the BPP's positive and negative contributions to the BLM.

The Positive Aspects of the BPP's Contributions

1)Self-Defense: This is one of the fundamental areas in which the BPP contributed to the BLM. It's also one of the fundamental things that set the BPP apart from most previous Black organizations and which attracted members (particularly the youth), mass support, and a mass following. The concept is not only sound it's also common sense. But it must be implemented correctly, otherwise it can prove more detrimental than beneficial. The self-defense policies of the BPP need to be analyzed in this light by present day Afrikan organizations. All history has shown that this government will bring its police and military powers to bear on any group which truly seeks to free Afrikans people. Any Black "freedom" organization which ignores self-defense does so at its own peril.

2)Revolutionary Nationalist Ideology: The BPP was a nationalist organization. Its main goal was the national liberation of Afrikan people in the U.S., and it restricted its membership to Blacks only. It was also revolutionary. The BPP theories and practices were based on socialist principles. It was anti-capitalist and struggled for a socialist revolution of U.S. society.

On the national level, the BPP widely disseminated socialist based programs to the Afrikan masses. Internationally, it provided Afrikans in the U.S. with a broader understanding of our relationship to the Afrikan continent, the emerging independent Afrikan nations, Third World nations, Socialist nations, and all the Liberation Movements associated with these nations. Overall the ideology provided Afrikans here with a more concrete way of looking at and analyzing the world. Heretofore much of Black analysis of the world, and the society in which we live, was based on making ourselves acceptable to White society, proving to Whites that we were human, proving to Whites that we were ready for equality, proving we were equal to

Whites, disproving racist ideas held by Whites, struggling for integration or equal status with Whites, theories of " loving the enemy", "hating the enemy", "they're all devils", spookism, and other fuzzy images of how the real world worked.

3)Mass Organizing Techniques: Another fundamental thing that attracted members and mass support to the BPP was its policy of "serving the people." This was a policy of going to the masses, living among them, sharing their burdens, and organizing the masses to implement their own solutions to the day to day problems that were of great concern to them.

By organizing and implementing the desires of the masses, the BPP organized community programs ranging from free breakfast for children, to free health clinics, to rent strikes resulting in tenant ownership of their buildings, to Liberation School for grade-schoolers, to free clothing drives, to campaigns for community control of schools, community control of police, and campaigns to stop drugs, crime, and police murder and brutality in the various Black colonies across America. For these reasons, and others, the influence of the BPP spread far beyond its actual membership. Not only did the BPP programs teach self-reliance, but years later the government established similar programs such as free school lunch, expanded medicare and day care facilities, and liberalized court procedures for tenant takeovers of poorly maintained housing, partly if not primarily in order to snuff out the memory of previous similar BPP programs and the principle of self-reliance.

4)Practice of Woman's Equality: Another positive contribution of the BPP was its advocation and practice of equality for women throughout all levels of the organization and in society itself. This occurred at a time when most Black Nationalist organizations were demanding that the woman's role be in the home and/or one step behind the Black man, and at a time when the whole country was going through a great debate on the woman' liberation issue.

5)Propaganda Techniques: The BPP made significant contributions to the art of propaganda. It was very adept at spreading its message an ideas through its newspaper The Black Panther, mass rallies, speaking tours, slogans, posters, leaflets, cartoons, buttons, symbols (i.e., the clenched fist), graffiti, political trials, and even

funerals. The BPP also spread its ideas through very skillful use of the establishment's t.v., radio, and print media.

One singular indication, although there are others, of the effectiveness of BPP propaganda techniques is that even today, over a decade later, a large part of the programs shown on t.v. are still "police stories" and many of the roles available to Black actors are limited to police roles. A lot of this has to do with the overall process of still trying to rehabilitate the image of the police from its devastating exposure during the Panther era, and to prevent the true role of the police in this society from being exposed again.

The Negative Aspects of the BPP Contributions

1)Leadership Corrupted: COINTELPRO eventually intimidated and corrupted all three of the BPP's top leaders: Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale and Eldrige Cleaver. Each, in their own way, caved in to the pressures and began acting in a manner that was deliberately designed to destroy the BPP, and to disillusion not only Party members but Afrikan people in America for years to come. COINTELPRO's hopes were that Afrikan's in America would be so disillusioned that never again would they trust or follow any Afrikan leader or organization which advocated real solutions to Black oppression.

2)Combined Above and Underground: This was the most serious structural flaw in the BPP. Party members who functioned openly in the BPP offices, or organized openly in the community, by day might very well have been the same people who carried out armed operations at night. This provided the police with a convenient excuse to make raids on any and all BPP offices, or members homes, under the pretext that they were looking for suspects, fugitives, weapons, and or explosives. It also sucked the BPP into taking the un-winnable position of making stationary defenses of BPP offices. There should have been a clear separation between the above ground Party and the underground armed apparatus. Also small military forces should never adopt, as a general tactic, the position of making stationary defenses of offices, homes, buildings, etc.

3)Rhetoric Outstripped Capabilities: Although the BPP was

adept at the art of propaganda and made very good use of its own and the establishment's media, still too many Panthers fell into the habit of making boisterous claims in the public media, or selling "wolf tickets" that they couldn't back up. Eventually, they weren't taken seriously anymore. The press, some of whom were police agents, often had only to stick a microphone under a Panther's nose to make him or her began spouting rhetoric. This often played into the hands of those who were simply looking for slanderous material to air or to provide possible intelligence information to the police.

4)Lumpen Tendencies: It can be safely said that the largest segment of the New York City BPP membership (and probably nationwide) were workers who held everyday jobs. Other segments of the membership were semi-proletariat, students, youths, and lumpen-proletariat. The lumpen tendencies within some members were what the establishment's media (and some party members) played-up the most. Lumpen tendencies are associated with lack of discipline, liberal use of alcohol, marijuana, and curse-words; loose sexual morals, a criminal mentality, and rash actions. These tendencies in some Party members provided the media with better opportunities than they would otherwise have had to play up this aspect, and to slander the Party, which diverted public attention from much of the positive work done by the BPP.

5)Dogmatism: Early successes made some Panthers feel that they were the only possessors of absolute truths. Some became arrogant and dogmatic in their dealings with Party members, other organizations, and even the community. This turned people off.

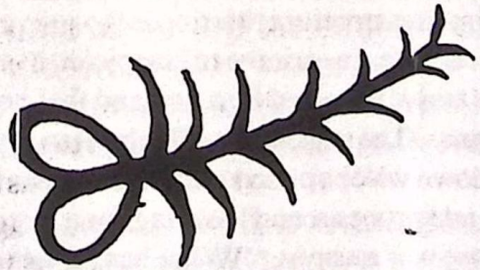
6)Failure to Organize Economic Foundations in Community: The BPP preached socialist politics. They were anti-capitalist and this skewered their concept of building economic foundations in the community. They often gave the impression that to engage in any business enterprise was to engage in capitalism and they too frequently looked with disdain upon the small-business people in the community. As a result the BPP built few businesses which generated income other than the Black Panther Newspaper, or which could provide self-employment to its membership and to people in the community. The BPP failed to encourage the Black community to set up its own businesses as a means of building an independent economic

foundation which would help break "outsiders" control of the Black community's economics, and move it toward economic self-reliance.

7)TV Mentality: The '60s were times of great flux. A significant segment of the U.S. population engaged in mass struggle. The Black Liberation, Native American, Puerto Rican, Asian, Chicano, Anti-war, White Revolutionary, and Woman's Liberation, Movements were all occurring more or less simultaneously during this era. It appears that this sizable flux caused some Panthers to think that a seizure of state power was imminent or that a revolutionary struggle is like a quick paced TV program. That is, it comes on at 9 p.m., builds to a crescendo by 9:45, and by 9:55 -- Victory!; all in time to make the 10 O'clock News. When it didn't happen after a few years, that is, Afrikans in the U.S. still were not free, no revolution occurred, and worse, the BPP was everywhere on the defensive, taking losses and riddled with dissention, many members became demoralized, disillusioned, and walked away or went back to old lifestyles. They were not psychologically prepared for a long struggle. In hindsight it appears that the BPP didn't do enough to root out this TV mentality in some members, but did in others, which is an aspect to ponder on.

Although the BPP made serious errors, it also gained a considerable measure of success and made several significant new contributions to the BLM. The final judgement of history may very well show that in its own way the BPP added the final ingredient to the Black Agenda necessary to attain real freedom: armed struggle; and that this was the great turning point which ultimately set the Black Liberation Movement on the final road to victory.

Marion Penitentiary 4/2/85



9/17/84

Chicago Statement on Marion

Greetings to all of you, and thank you for attending this program about Marion. I've been confined at Marion for five years now, and while it's always been a harsh prison, over the last year the number of atrocities committed against its prisoners has skyrocketed. I know that some people feel that prisoners deserve whatever hardships that happen to them. It's a sign of the times. But those who remember the mistakes of history know that the people of Germany, when confronted with incontrovertible proof of concentration camps atrocities after WW II, repeated over and over again, "But we didn't know...but we didn't know...." Well,just so you won't have that excuse, or make that mistake, i'll tell you what's happening at Marion, and it can be easily verified with only a little investigation.

Atrocities are being committed regularly upon prisoners at Marion. The range from brutal beatings and heat torture cells, to forced anus probes. Over 70 prisoners have been brutally beaten this year, some until they fell unconscious. There are only 350 prisoners all total at Marion, yet they have 225 guards there. That's two guards for every three prisoners. They have also constructed heat torture cells at Marion. They were constructed during the summer when the average temperature was 90 degrees, and they're still in use today. They constructed these torture cells by inclosing cells completely with tin, then they installed electric heaters in them. Prisoners are chained down in these torture chambers for days with the electric heater turned on as punishment or simply to break them and force them to cooperate in whatever scheme the officials have cooked up. One of the most cruel and degrading atrocity at Marion is the anus probe. Any guard, at any time, can accuse any prisoner of suspicion of concealing a foreign object in his body, followed by a demand that he submit to a finger probe of his anus. The prisoner must submit to the probe, or he is beaten, chained down while a prison staff member runs his finger up the prisoners anus and probes around looking for a foreign object.

Perhaps by now you're saying "What has all this to do with

you?", since you aren't in prison. Well, atrocities that began in prisons have a way of creeping outside, usually beginning with the oppressed nationalities, then eventually being applied to the general public, especially the poor.

Suppose you were a lawyer, which is a profession that's highly prestigious in this society. Certainly lawyers are treated better than prisoners. Well, if you were a lawyer with a client at Marion, you might very well be forced to submit your body to a sniffing by K-9 dogs in order to visit your client. It's happened before a Marion.

On July 9th of this year, two female lawyers, Nancy Horgan and Donna Kolb, were forced to submit their bodies to a sniffing by K-9 dogs before being permitted to see their clients. Supposedly the dogs (two legged and four legged) were looking for explosives or drugs, but the real reason was an attempt to terrify the lawyers into abandoning their prisoner clients.

Those lawyers are not prisoners. They are upstanding citizens with highly prestigious careers, yet they were degraded just as convicts are now being degraded and brutalized. Not only lawyers, but college law students, sociologist, prisoners' family members, mothers, grandmothers, wives, children, clergy members, and even priest and nuns visit prisoners regularly for various reasons. These people could easily be your friend, relative, clergyman or clergywoman -- or you. Would you want them -- or yourself -- submitted to a humiliating round with the K-9 sniffers?

Also, these dogs (both kind) are not infallible. K-9 dogs make mistakes too. A case in point is the time Marion set up a road block on the prison grounds to randomly stop visiting cars to subject both passengers and car to the K-9 sniff test. Two lawyers leaving the prison ran into this impromptu road block. The dogs sniffed them and they came up clean, but the dogs sniffed the car and came up with a strike. A through search of the car proved it to be a "false" strike. The dogs indicated a strike on another car that day. It belonged to a guard. It also proved to be a false strike. I guess it proves that even dogs have bad days too.

But what do you think would have happened if the dogs had made a false strike on the attorney's body at the road block? Or what if it had been a college student, a grandmother, a relative, a child, or

clergy person? Why the guards may have immediately demanded that they submit to a strip (i.e., naked) search and a probe of their anus or other body cavities. And if they refused they could be arrested, possibly chained down, and forcibly probed. If nothing was found they almost certainly would be charged with assault of the guard to cover the beating and wrongful search conducted by the guards, and as a potential trade off against any law suit that might be filed against the guards. And if found guilty of assault on a guard, they too could wind up being a convict.

They sometimes use these K-9 dogs at airports to sniff luggage, etc. They also sometimes use these dogs at random traffic check points in cities and on the highway. What do you think will happen if a dog makes a false strike on you at an airport or traffick checkpoint. You could easily wind up beaten, your body forcibly probed, convicted of assault, and imprisoned, even though you had no intentions of ever violating the law and becoming a prisoner. And that is what all this, the atrocities at Marion, have to do with you, or your family, friends, and loved ones -- because the same thing could happen to them, or you.

So write, wire, or call Norman Carlson, Director, Bureau of Prisons, Washington, D.C., and ask him why over 70 prisoners have been beaten at Marion this year, why they have and use heat torture cells, why they do finger probe searches of prisoners' anuses when metal detectors, or even x-rays in extreme circumstances, are more effective, why K-9 dogs have sniffed lawyers, and why Marion has 225 guards for only 350 prisoners.

Demand a reply and demand that these atrocities cease. Write Jerry Williford, Warden, Marion Penitentiary, Marion, IL, and ask him the same questions, and demand a reply. They'll give you some cock-and-bull story in reply but at least they'll know that they're being watched that in itself will make them cut down on or cease many of these atrocities. Thank you for your attention.

Sundiata Acoli
Marion Penitentiary

Progressive Afrikan governments are a great inspirat Afrikans in America. Each success by Afrikans on the Mother Continent raises the spirits of all Afrikans in America. Each defeat or setback, likewise saddens the hearts of their brothers and sisters in the U.S. Thus, politically aware Afrikans in America watch the present government of Ghana with keen interest. History has taught us to do so.

Afrika played a large role in America's decision to begin desegregation of the South in the early 50's. In the aftermath of World War II, the U.S. knew that many new Afrikan nations would soon become independent. It also knew that these newly-independent Afrikan states would be sending delegates to the U.N. in New York. And, it knew that many of the delegates would be making repeated trips between the U.N. and the nation's Capitol: Washington, D.C. At the time Washington, D.C., located on the borderline of the South, was still a rigidly segregated city.

The prospect of Afrikan diplomats being constantly exposed to humiliating racial incidents in the nation's Capitol gave U.S. policy makers nightmares. If such was allowed to happen, America's image, and influence, would be wrecked worldwide. Faced with such an explosive problem, the U.S. decided to desegregate.

First came the Supreme Court's decision in 1954 which began the desegregation of the schools. Then in 1955 Ms. Rosa Parks, Montgomery, Alabama, Afrikan woman, refused to give her bus seat to a White man and was arrested. Enraged Afrikan masses, led by Dr. Martin Luther King, boycotted the city's busses for over a year which forced the bus lines to desegregate. That boycott was the birth of the Civil Rights Movement which would sweep across the country for the next decade.

At the time of the Montgomery boycott, Osagefo Kwame N'krumah was leading Ghana to independence. In 1957 he became its first President. As more Afrikan nations became independent in the 60's, the influence of their independence struggles helped to gradually

change the Civil Right Movement to the Black Power Movement, and then into the Black Liberation Movement (BLM).

Unlike the Civil Rights Movement which began in the segregated South and preached nonviolence, the BLM began on the more liberal Western and Midwestern shores of America. The BLM preached Malcolm X's philosophy of "freedom by any means necessary", including violent means. It chain reacted eastward, exploding the Afrikan ghetto-colonies of the Northern cities throughout the late 60's and early 70's which was the high point of Afrikan struggle in the U.S. to date.

The U.S. is well aware of Afrika's effect on Afrikan peoples' struggle in the U.S. That's one reason most of its news coverage of Afrika is negative. Control of the news media allows it to do this. The press in America is no more "free" than it is in the Union of South Africa. Both are called "free", but most Afrikans in America know better. Since the days of chattel slavery Afrikans in America have learned to read between the lines.

If the American news says that an Afrikan government is bad, then most Afrikans in America know that that government must be doing something right for its people. Or they have learned to assume so, even without having the hard facts to go on.

Some time ago the U.S. news media began sending out threatening news releases about Ghana's President Jerry Rawlings. They said that he's a friend of Libya's President Murnmar Qaddafi. Anyone who the American news media links with President Qaddafi must be bad, or that's the impression that the U.S. wants to spread.

After some months of bombing the air waves with similar news releases, a coup was attempted in Ghana. It failed. Afrikans in America breathed a sigh of relief. The U.S. news media pled ignorance to the cause behind the attempted coup. Once again some Afrikans in America read between the lines, others didn't need to. Most arrived at the same conclusion: President Rawlings must be doing something right for the Ghanian people.

Sundiata Acoli, Political POW
Marion Prison, Illinois
10/2/83

LETTER TO THE IRISH PEOPLE

The Irish People Newspaper
4951 Broadway
New York, N.Y. 10034

Sir,

The Irish People Newspaper, Irish Northern Aid (INA) and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) (which has been slurred by many Western newspapers) stooped to the level of those same newspapers in your recent slur of the Black Liberation Army (BLA) and the Weatherpeople Underground Organization (WUO).

Frankly, the slur exposes more about the nature of Irish Republican leadership than was perhaps intended. It indicates that if Ireland should gain its independence under the present Republican leadership, it would only become an oppressor of other colonial countries in the same way that Briton and America are oppressing Ireland today.

Briton is only the weak old father, America is the virile son and plays the dominant role in all affairs of the Western world. Briton could not suppress Ireland's independence for one second more if it did not have the passive consent of the American government, and you know it! The Irish People Newspaper, INA, and the IRA, all soft pedal America's prominent role in retarding Ireland's independence, yet eagerly jump at the chance to slur the BLA which is also struggling for the independence of the Black Nation here in the U.S. You could not have made your position clearer.

Contrary to your assertion, the Black Nation in the U.S. is most definitely beset by occupation forces in its communities -- the police! Also, contrary to your headline article, the UPI did not "taint the IRA", you did that yourself when you rushed pell mell to grovel at the feet of your oppressor by slurring the BLA.

Sundiata Acoli, BLA POW
Marion Penitentiary 11\9\81

SUNDIATA ACOLI

Sundiata Acoli, a New Afrikan political prisoner of war, mathematician , and computer analyst, was born January 14, 1937, in Decatur, Texas, and raise in Vernon, Texas. He graduated from Prairie View A&M College of Texas in 1956 with a B.S. in mathematics and for the next 13 years worked for various computer-oriented firms, mostly in the New York area.

During the summer of 1964 he did voter registration work in Mississippi. In 1968 he joined the Harlem, New York, Black Panther Party and did community work around the issues of schools, housing, jobs, child care, drugs, and police brutality.

In 1969 he and 13 others were arrested in the Panther 21 conspiracy case. He was held in jail without bail and on trial for two years before being acquitted, along with all other defendants, by a jury deliberating less than two hours. Upon release, FBI intimidation of potential employers shut off all employment possibilities in the computer profession and stepped up COINTELPRO harrassment, surveillance, and provocations soon drove him underground.

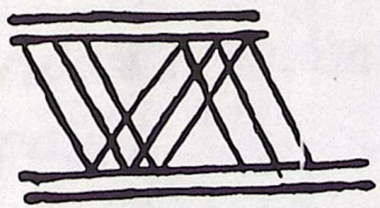
In May 1973, while driving the New Jersey Turnpike, he and his comrades were ambushed by N.J. state troopers. One campanion, Zayd Shakur, was killed, another campanion Assata Shakur, was wounded and captured. One state trooper was killed and another wounded, and Sundiata was captured days later.

After a highly sensationalized and prejudicial trial he was convicted of the death of the state trooper and was sentenced to Trenton State Prison (TSP) for life plus 30 years consecutive.

Upon entering TSP he was subsequently confined to a new and specially created Management Control Unit (MCU) solely because of his political background. He remained in MCU almost five years in a stripped cell smaller that the SPCA's space requirement for a German Shepard dog. He was only let out of the cell for ten minutes a day for showers and two hours twice a week for recreation and was subjected to constant harrassment and several attacks by guards. During one period he was not let out of the cell for cell for six continous months.

In September 1979, International Jurist interviewed Sundiata and subsequently declared him a political prisoner. A few days later prison officials secretely transferred him during the middle of the night to the federal prison system and put him enroute to the infamous federal concentration camp at Marion, Illinois, although he had no federal charges or sentences. An entrance physical exam by federal medical personnel disclosed that he had been heavily exposed to tuberculosis while at Trenton State Prison.

Marion is the highest security prison in the U.S., also one of the harshest, and there Sundiata was locked down 23 hours a day in a stripped cell containing only a stone bed, toilet, wash bowl, and a few personal items. Brutal conditions and violence are epidemic at Marion where murders and assaults by guards and prisoners alike are common occurrences. During one turbulent period beginning October, 1983, Sundiata and all prisoners were confined to their cell blocks 24 hours a day for nine continous months as wolf packs of guards roamed about the complex beating prisoners at random.



Sundiata spent eight years at Marion, longer than most any other prisoner. In July, 1987 he was transferred to the federal penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas, where he is currently confined.

Address: Sundiata Acoli, #39794-066, P.O. Box 1000, Leavenworth, KS 66048.

Other books and pamphlets by Sundiata

Sunviews (book).....$5.00

The Liveright Interview (pamphlet).....$2.50

Bits 'N Pieces (pamphlet).....$2.50

Brief History Of The Afrikan Prison Struggle (pamp.)$3.00

Prices to Prisoners (Payable by check, cash or stamps)

Sunviews.....$1.00
Any pamphlet....$60 cents each

****
*** Add $1.00 to the total order amount ***
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****

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